

P.A.
5112
822f

ODGERS

FEDERATED
AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY FACILITY



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

*With Compliments
and Odgers*
Aug 22 1901

Federated Australia."

PRIZE ESSAY

AND

NOVELETTE,

BY

ALFRED ODGERS.

PRACTICABLE SCHEME FOR THE
FEDERATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA:
SMITH & HESP, Printers,
Bray Street.

JAMES DALLY
OLD AND RARE BOOKS
Oatlands, Tasmania
Telephone Oatlands 90

2
“Federated Australia.”

PRIZE ESSAY

AND

NOVELETTE,

BY

ALFRED ODGERS.

A PRACTICABLE SCHEME FOR THE
FEDERATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA :
SMITH & HESP, Printers,
Bray Street.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

PR
5112
822 f

PRIZE ESSAY.

BY ALFRED ODGERS.

(August 15, 1889.)

A PRACTICABLE SCHEME FOR THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE federation of the Australian Colonies is of national importance. It is not a new question, for "in 1849 Lord Grey advised this step." Had it been accomplished then, or even twenty years later, our population to-day would have been nearer five millions than its present number, viz., about three and a half millions. It is certainly the "coming question;" it is more, it is the coming reality. Of late, in dealing with it, some have sought to show that it will not be desirable nor beneficial, but others, with quite as much reason, have argued it will be both. More than that, some of our English and colonial statesmen "believe that the time is not far distant when all the Australian colonies will be federated." The whole question has now emerged from theory and sentiment into one of practical politics, and it is our pleasing task—Firstly, to propound a scheme; secondly, to affirm its practicability. A reference to the map of Australia will show the geographical position of the various colonies to be included in the Empire, and would assist in deciding as to *which* should be the Federal City. This is a very important and difficult question to deal with; yet it is not insurmountable. It can as easily be settled here as it was in Canada when the Dominion was formed.

THE SCHEME PROPOUNDED.

The organic union, as now suggested, is to include the following colonies, viz., New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, but inasmuch as the geographical position of South Australia and her Northern Territory, and that of New South Wales and her Broken Hill and Wilcannia districts, places them at too great a distance from their respective capitals, provision must be made for the ultimate division of these two great colonies, thus giving two additional ones, making in all nine, such to form "our Colonial Empire." Fiji and British New Guinea are not yet of such importance as to claim a place in the Union, but eventually they and other islands will be included.

From the latest statistics we find that the population of the seven colonies is 3,678,046, and their combined area of land 3,075,238 square miles. Its magnitude may be partially realised if we remember that Great Britain and Ireland, with a population of over 37,000,000, have only 121,115 square miles, thus making our new Empire nearly twenty-five times larger than the old.

ITS CONSTITUTION: DETAILS OF.

The Empire; Its Name.—To be known as “Australasia.” Other names have been suggested, such as “United Australia,” “Dominion of Australia,” “Empire of Australasia,” and “Australia and New Zealand.” The writer, however, thinks the first, as above, is forcible, suitable, and comprehensive. The great German nation is satisfied with the single word “Germany,” the Russians, the French, and the Americans (with their population of over 60,000,000), with the one-word name.

Its Territory and People.—The area of New South Wales is 309,175 square miles, and population, 1,042,919. Victoria, 87,884 square miles; population, 1,036,119. South Australia, 903,425 square miles; population, 317,446. Queensland, 668,224 square miles; population, 366,944. Western Australia, 975,920; population, 42,488. Tasmania, 26,375 square miles; population, 142,478. New Zealand, 104,235 square miles; population, 603,361. Total area, 3,075,238 square miles; total population, 3,551,755. The Victorian Statist (Hayter) has just given the total population as 3,678,046, or an increase for the year of 126,295, of which Victoria claims 54,000 and New South Wales 42,000. These figures are very suggestive in view of federation. Allowing for births, the net gain of immigration is only 59,958 persons, or only about 1,000 persons per week for the seven colonies. With our vast territory and its splendid resources our united increase should rather be 10,000 per week.

The Federal Parliament.—(1) To be composed of one House only, which shall elect a Premier and an Executive or Minister, (2) To consist of a Governor-General, who shall be its President, seven Colonial Governors, and twenty-one Federal Representatives, making in all twenty-nine members, but giving, when New South Wales and South Australia each form a new colony, a House of thirty-seven members. (3) To meet every two years or when emergency arises, but not to meet during the sitting of any Colonial Parliament. (4) Any two colonies, through their Governors and representatives, may demand a meeting, after giving three months' notice, but an “extraordinary meeting” may be called at a week's notice, such notice to be given by the Governor-General and Premier. (5) No colony to secede from the Union without giving two years' notice of its intention at an ordinary meeting of Parliament. (6) Its functions: To deal only with national questions affecting the Empire, such as war and defence, army and navy, relations with the Pacific, influx of criminals and unsuitable persons, quarantine regulations, control of fisheries and waters, uniformity of railway gauges, intercolonial telegraph lines, patents and rights, carriage, tariffs, Customs revenue, uniformity of

taxation, and any other matter of national interest. (7) All powers to be properly defined, so that it will not interfere with the internal working of the various Colonial Parliaments. (8) Period of duration, five years ; but four colonies may demand a dissolution.

The Governor-General.—(1) To be appointed by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, after the wishes of the colonies have been consulted. (2) Term of office, seven years, with right of removal at any time should he cease to represent our Empire. (3) To be the President of the Federal Parliament. As such he will represent the “stability, authority, and dignity of the British Empire,” thus helping to bind together these two great Empires.

The Colonial Governors.—(1) To be elected by ballot by the people of their respective colonies. (2) Term of office, three years, or during good behavior. (3) To be native-born and not under forty years of age. (4) To have a seat in their own Colonial Parliaments as Presidents. (5) To be a member of the Federal Parliament, in virtue of high office of Governor.

The Federal Representatives.—(1) Each colony to appoint three. (2) To be elected by ballot by the members of both Houses of Parliament from the members of the Upper House or the Ministry. (3) Term, three years, or during good behavior. Having a seat in their respective Colonial Parliaments they will be in touch with the wants of their separate colonies. It has been proved in America that a better class of men as Representatives are to be found in the Senate, than in the House elected by the people. The latter, it is intended, elects politicians ; the former, states-men. Therefore, federal representatives should be chosen from the ranks of the ablest men in the Legislative Council. A writer has said, “that if Australian democracy determines to elect the federal representatives by the voice of the people, and not by the Parliaments, they will incur a risk of perishing miserably among the shoals of Democracy.”

Federal City.—It should be central, because it will be the London of Australasia. In looking at the map, geographically our own fair city (Adelaide) claim that position. Confessedly it is a difficult problem to solve. Sydney claims it on the ground of seniority ; Melbourne, because of its rapid growth and vitality ; and Adelaide deserves it because of its suitability every way. Sir Henry Parkes has said that New South Wales will not agree to Melbourne being that city, because, he says it will “give it the lion’s share in all things ;” but he would be quite willing that Sydney should become so distinguished, and has since said that Albury should be the city. Now there are two modes of getting over the difficulty—one is to hold the Federal Parliament alternately in each city, beginning with Sydney. This would certainly place each in the same position, but a very strong argument against this would be as to where the Governor-General’s residence should be. Although he might be quite prepared to attend the Federal Parliament when held in either colony, yet we could not expect him to change his residence each year. If he were willing to do so, this plan would necessitate building a costlier

Government House than we now have for each colony. The question must be solved in the present Federal Council, and must not be left till the union has been completed, otherwise on this rock the whole fabric will split.

The other plan is to do as was done in Canada when the same difficult question arose. The States fixed on a new district and formed a neutral city, viz., Ottawa. We could certainly "found" a more central one than either mentioned, and as our intercolonial railway lines are being rapidly constructed it could be reached within a week from the furthest capital. It should certainly be on the continent, and neither Hobart nor New Zealand must be thought of. The Barrier Ranges district has been suggested, that is, somewhere between Broken Hill and Menindie. It is certainly central, but at present not suitable, yet those who have resided there the last few years know that with all the comforts of civilisation following the "uprising" of a federal city, it would become one of the healthiest and most suitable spots, besides which its wonderful natural resources in silver and other minerals would give it giant growth and soon make it a great city.

Colonial Parliaments.—(1) Each colony to retain its Upper and Lower Houses as now constituted, but the members in the latter might be fairly reduced one-half by having one-man districts. As a reason for this change the colonies will get very large benefit from the Federal Parliament, and will not, therefore, need so much local legislation. Again, as the cost of the Federal Parliament will mean to each colony additional yearly expenditure every effort should be made to keep down local expenses. (2) The Colonial Governor to be its President. (3) Its functions—To deal with all questions affecting its internal management, and to thoroughly master all intercolonial matters which shall be dealt with in the Federal Parliament.

Australian Privy Council.—This Council becomes necessary in this scheme, seeing that a Senate or Upper House (as in Canada) is not included. We do not think the latter essential for Australian federation, whilst it will increase the federal costs to a very large extent. We doubt if Canadian federation would be desirable or practicable for Australasia. (1) The Council to be composed of the Federal Premier, the Premiers and Chief Justices from each colony, with the Governor-General as its President. (2) To meet as occasion requires, but not during the sitting of the Federal or Colonial Parliaments.

High Commissioners or Agents-General.—The present term, Agents-General, is not sufficiently dignified, seeing they represent in England our Empire, and that they will be the very best statesmen our colonies can produce. (1) Each colony to have one. To be elected by the Federal Parliament from the names sent on by the respective Colonial Parliaments. (2) Term of office, five years, or during good behavior. (3) The seven to form a "Board of Advice" in London, and to act generally for the Colonial Empire. By this means vast sums of money, when floating loans and accepting tenders for the colonies' requirements, will be saved. (4) To have a seat in

the English House of Commons, but to vote only when questions affecting the Colonial Empire are before the House. England will readily consent to this, because it will be a step towards Imperial Federation. They will represent Australasia in Great Britain, whilst the Governor-General will represent British sovereignty here. Such are the details of the scheme (briefly dealt with because of limitation of words), and it only remains that its practicability be affirmed.

IT IS PRACTICABLE.

In proof of this bare assertion we shall further on give three historical examples from modern times. As a matter of fact the "thin edge of the wedge" has been inserted. We have really, though unconsciously, begun the great work. Our intercolonial railways and telegraphs, into and through other colonies, are proofs of this. Two conferences have been held, the last of which was styled "Federal Council," and was held at Hobart Town in February of this year (1889). Admittedly there are difficulties to be overcome, the greatest of which is its basis, that is, shall it be a free trade or protective one? It is generally understood that it must be the former. Against its practicability it is argued that the tendency of each colony is now towards Protection. Even New South Wales is gradually becoming so. We share the conviction of others that when such is the case and each colony has a "war of tariffs" with each other, then, as a natural result, a reaction will set in and free-trade will be the cry. Its base must be that of intercolonial free trade, and probably absolute free trade to the world.

As to its cost it is practicable, because it will be divided *pro rata* between the colonies according to population. Our present cost is very heavy. We find that the seven Colonial Governors receive for salaries alone £42,000 per year, and if special allowances, etc., are added it will be more than £60,000. We are not now dealing with Governor's residences or maintenance of same, but simply their salaries as against those of the Federal Parliament, as follows:—A Governor-General would get £12,000 per year; seven Colonial Governors at £2,500 each; twenty-one Representatives at £1,500 each; and seven High Commissioners at £2,000 each. This will amount to about £79,000 per year, or an excess on salaries of £19,000.

Now, by reducing the number of members in the Lower House of each colony where payment of members is made a very large sum each year may be saved. Then if we add interest of money and expenditure saved on residences and furnishing, etc., and all the extras that our Colonial Governors would *not want*, we think the entire cost of the Federal Empire will be very little more than our present form of Government. But supposing it were even more, it would be money well spent, because it would mean very great national progress. Again, it is practicable, because it is in accord with the democratic spirit of the age. The voice of the people is heard and its effects seen, first, in the representatives in Parliament, and then in the election of the Colonial Governors *by the people*.

Once again, a strong argument in proof of its practicability is that it has been accomplished elsewhere. For instance, take the British Empire. It includes England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, with their distinctive nationality ; besides which are her dependencies in India, South Africa, the East, Canada, and Australia, with their various races of men, all under one Sovereign.

Germany is an instance, coming closer to the spirit of Federation. In that great Empire there are twenty-six States or Colonies, having an area of land amounting to 208,683 square miles, and a population of 50,000,000. Its people include Germans, Prussians, Austrians, French, Poles, and Jews, and many other nationalities, and yet they are now united as one Empire. Since its union in 1871 it has made rapid progress. It is now amongst the first nations of the earth, and a leading one in the art of war, education, commerce, and manufactures.

The United States of America is a nearer case in point. At its constitution it only included thirteen States, now it has in union thirty-eight States, six Territories, and one Federal district. Its area of land is 3,008,400 square miles, and its population is estimated for next year at 70,000,000. To show how under federation it has prospered in 1861 the national debt was £593,640,000, but in 1888 it was only £190,000,000, having reduced it in twenty-seven years by the fabulous amount of £403,640,000, and to-day, as they do not wish to further reduce it, they yearly divide the excess of revenue over expenditure between the various States in union. The "Swiss Confederation" is yet another case.

But our strongest argument in support of its practicability is that of Canada. It was constituted a Dominion in 1867. Its area of land is a little more than ours, thus :—Canada, 3,470,257 square miles ; Australasia, 3,075,238 square miles. Its population is only about half as many again as ours, whilst at its union it was considerably less. It had all the disadvantages of race, creeds, nationalities, tariffs, and site of federal city to contend with, and yet the seven provinces and a vast territory are now one splendid Empire. Its federal city, Ottawa, was founded for that specific object. It pays its Governor-General only £10,000 per year, and has been honored with Royalty for the position. It is said "that no possession of the British Empire has made greater strides during the last twenty years, whether in trade, wealth, or population." Its trade with Great Britain and Ireland and the States is more than £34,000,000 annually. It has *not* built up one or two cities at the expense of the others, because the national works carried out, such as railways, canals, etc., have opened up immense trade with existing cities. We therefore contend that if Germany, the United States, and Canada, with all the difficulties they had to overcome, such as time, custom, sentiment, and nationality, could each accomplish and perfect this great work, how much more easily it can be brought about in these colonies, where we really have only two great difficulties, viz., tariffs and site ; and where the national sentiment is loudly proclaimed : Australia for the Australians. The writer does not hold up Canadian Federation as being perfect. Their Constitution may be improved. Let us gather from them and others that which will just suit in forming

our union, and having a right to use the scaffolding with which they finished their great werk, we ought, with greater ease, build up a greater and more perfect organisation than theirs. "Not practicable!" says a writer on this subject, "there is already in some respects substantial unity. . . . The affinities of race, religion, politics, ideas, and national sentiment are exercising mutual attractions. Every telegraph wire that crosses the border is an additional thread to connect, and every railway line a bolt to rivet the colonies together."

CONCLUSION.

If the expediency of a scheme may aid its practical accomplishment then this last argument should carry weight. In a few words, it is expedient, because it will bring population from Great Britain and elsewhere. It will enable us to borrow from the English market very much cheaper than now. It will lead to capitalists and others investing Trust and other funds, seeing the security we offer is so good. It will give us a uniform gauge of railway-line right through each colony, thus cheapening cost of carriage. It will enable us to thoroughly defend our shores from invasion. It means the adoption of uniform time, tariffs, and taxation. And lastly, for our Island-Continent it means such future greatness that we of to-day little dream of, whilst for South Australia it means the opening up of many new markets for our wheat, wool, wine, fruit, and other productions; and as Port Darwin will be the Brindisi of Australia the British and foreign steamers will land their passengers and cargo there, from whence, by our transcontinental line, they will reach each colony of the Empire, thus reducing the time coming from the old world, besides giving us great commercial advantages.

It will do all this—it will do more. It will bind into one common union seven great colonies whose territory is vast, whose resources are prolific, and whose people are loyal—and in these "Southern Seas" shall arise a powerful Empire, whose influence will reach to every civilised nation, and whose good wishes old Empires will be proud to own and strive to maintain.

"HAIL! our Australia?
Girt by the sea,
Sons of the summer land,
Brothers are we.
Ring out our battle-cry!
March at its call:
Each for the Commonwealth,
God for us all.'

Comrades Australian,
Foemen of wrong!
Fending the feeble, fight!
Fight, and be strong!
Shoulder to shoulder stand!
Stand like a wall!
Each for the Commonwealth,
God for us all."

—Selected.

ADDENDA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—The writer claims for the S.A. Literary Societies' Union the honor of having been the means of securing the first printed constitution for a Federated Australia, having in 1888 offered a prize for that purpose. The Judges were the late Sir John Bray, Sir Langdon Bonython, and F. W. Pennefather, Esq., and the President of the Union for that year being His Excellency the Governor, the Right Hon. Earl of Kintore, G.C.M.G.

STATISTICS.—In 1889 the total population of Australia and New Zealand was 3,551,755, and on January 1st, 1901, the date of Proclamation of the Australian Commonwealth, 4,476,955, being an increase of 925,203.

The population in Federated Australia on January 1st 1901, was as follows :—New South Wales, 1,346,240; Victoria, 1,175,463; Queensland, 498,523; South Australia, 367,800; Tasmania, 177,340; West Australia, 168,129. Total population in the Australian Commonwealth, 3,733,495. New Zealand, with a population of 743,463, not in the Union.

AUSTRALIA FEDERATED.—From 1892 Federal Councils and Conventions were held at Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, and Adelaide, at which the Constitution was finally adopted. The Parliaments of the several States considered the great question after which the Referendum was used—a large majority of the people deciding in favor of Federation.

Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen gave her assent to the Bill on July 9, 1900. The declaration of the Commonwealth was made at Sydney on January 1st, 1901, by Lord Hopetoun, the Governor General, and the opening of the first Federal Parliament in Melbourne on May 9th, 1901, was declared by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York by desire of His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, thus more closely uniting Greater Britain to the British Empire.

ALFRED ODGERS,
Hon. Secretary.
Federation League S.A.

Adelaide,
July 9th, 1901.

PRIZE NOVELETTE.

(BY ALFRED ODGERS.)

THE SQUATTER'S STORY AN ADVENTURE IN THE NARRACOORTE CAVES.

PREFACE.

THIS story is dedicated to the pioneers and first settlers of Australia, who so nobly and heroically, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, stood their ground, and thus largely helped to make our fair land what it is to-day—a prosperous State.

CHAPTER I.

It was in the year 1848, a few years before the Victorian gold-diggings era, that, in company with two young fellows about my own age, under an engagement with a Victorian squatter, I travelled towards the south-east of South Australia for the purpose of selecting suitable land for a sheep-station. We had his confidence (besides which, he was a distant relative of mine); he therefore agreed to thoroughly equip our party, and to give us each a share in the venture, and, as money was a scarce commodity, we were to be allowed a certain percentage of the increase of the flock in lieu of wages—a common custom then.

One of my companions was a young Englishman of aristocratic birth, whose friends were glad to be rid of, because of his fast and indolent habits; though I must say, that whilst with me he did not exhibit these failings, and a more honorable, faithful, hard-working young fellow than Cecil Maitland I never knew. He was daring and generous, a thorough scholar, and a pleasant companion. The other was a thrifty young Scotchman, who a few months before had run away from a vessel. He, too, was thoroughly reliable, of pleasant temperament and splendid physique. “Mac.” as we called him, was the life of our party. In his early days, in the “Land o’ Cakes,” he had gained useful experience amongst sheep and cattle; we therefore found him of very great service. Of myself little shall be said, except that I was the son of a well-known Anglican bishop, had received a good education, but, disliking the monotony of a profession, took to bush life.

We left Geelong about the end of August, and after a few months' slow travelling reached the locality known as Mosquito Plains, but now known as Narracoorte. We soon erected huts and sheepyards,

and began to feel at home. It was a splendid place for all kinds of game. The plains were alive with kangaroos and emus. The lagoons were full of swans, ducks, and teal, whilst the great gum trees were the homes of screeching white cockatoos, gorgeously-plumed parrots, and other kinds of birds. At first we treated them all as game, but soon regarded some of them as vermin. The kangaroos were especially so, because they fed upon the grass of the higher grounds thus depriving our sheep of it. Mac. soon invented a novel way of dispersing them. One morning we caught an old man kangaroo, and securely fixed on him an old pair of riding-pants, a pilot cloth jacket, and soft felt hat. Around his neck was tied a cracked metal bullock-bell. He was certainly a queer-looking object, and much was the fun we had getting him ready. His rig-out was not appreciated, for with one leap he was many yards from us. We watched him going for very life. All the while the bell was jangling as such a bell only can. He made straight for his companions, and when near them they turned and fled in every direction; and for the rest of the season we had very few amongst us.

We had been there just twelve months, and were eagerly expecting the promised party with fresh supplies and news from home. One bright morning in December, a month late, we saw them coming, and a right glad welcome we gave them. Victor Elliston, the leader, was well known to us, but the other two were strangers to all but myself. I was alarmed when I recognised them and they appeared somewhat surprised when they saw me. However, more about them later on. Elliston told us that he picked them up on the road, to replace his first two, who had left him to go gold-digging. They saw many small parties prospecting; and doing a little themselves, it had made them just a month late in reaching us. They had each found some of the precious metal, and before leaving the locality Elliston had exchanged his for sovereigns.

On the second morning after arriving Elliston handed me his money to keep, as I was the recognised head of the party, and generally remained at home. The two others did not do so. I took the sovereigns, intending to fix on some suitable place of safety; till then, I put them in my body-belt.

It is said that the face is an index of character. It was true in this case, for in addition to a facial display of bad tendencies, I knew them to be bad characters, and therefore very undesirable men for us, and decided to get rid of them as soon as possible. I noticed that one of them appeared very abstracted, and was evidently working out some problem. The apparent studied indifference of the other also struck me very forcibly. My first cause of alarm happened the first evening, after tea, when both went out and did not return till nearly midnight. They said they had been to an old cave to set some traps, but instinctively I knew they were not telling the truth. I was now on the alert, and made up my mind the very next night to talk the matter over with Maitland, Elliston, and Mac.

CHAPTER II.—CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

The next morning, after an early breakfast, all except myself went mustering sheep. About two hours later I saw one of the party galloping home at a furious pace. It was one of the new-comers, Dowling. Springing from his saddle, and almost breathless with excitement, he said Maitland had fallen down an opening in a big cave; he could hear his cry for help, but could not reach him. Hastily getting my horse, and taking with us some rope, candles, and matches, we hurried to the caves. I knew them well, for I had often taken shelter in one of them during a storm. We reached the spot; the opening was like a well-hole in the ground, which I afterwards ascertained led into the "big cave." Listening, I could distinctly hear a piercing cry for help. Picking up the trunk of a small tree close by we let it down with a rope. Hastily we descended. The bottom was only about fifteen feet from the surface, but it led off into a cave. As thick darkness was before us we lit our candles. Following the sound of Maitland's voice we passed through a small aperture, which led into a great vaulted cave. It was of immense size, and lying on the floor were great broken columns of stalagmite, which at one time appeared to have supported the roof. In some places there were gaping openings in the floor, which led to unknown depths. Passing on as rapidly as we dared we came to a number of pillars of stalagmite. Squeezing between two, we were in another large chamber, or cave. In the distance there appeared to be great cages, behind whose bars the imagination easily pictured huge animals of all kinds, all formed of beautiful stalactite hanging from the roof, of the same peculiar formation in pillars and columns supporting it. As it was my first time of being so far within these caves, I shuddered, as a thought flashed through my mind, "What if a block of rock or stalactite should fall across the opening and shut us in?" I was very anxious to rescue Maitland and then as quickly as possible get out of such an unearthly place.

* * * * *

We were now nearing him, and knew by his call he was not many yards from us. But how strange the tone of his voice! And supposing he fell where we entered, how came he so far from it? These were thoughts of mine, but in my eagerness to save him they were not heeded. Lifting our candles, and peering into the shadows before us, we saw him lying down, apparently injured. I was stooping to help him, when, quick as thought, both he (who was not Maitland, but Price) and my companion (Dowling) raised their pistols to my head, and said, "We've got you out of the way!" and demanded my money, or they would leave me there. I was for the moment speechless, so sudden was the act. Caught in a trap, and at the mercy of these two villains, what could I do? Having nothing to defend myself with, I handed them my body-belt, containing my own and Elliston's money, thinking that when I got out my companions would soon catch them and make them suffer. But little I

knew of the diabolical plans of my captors. Dowling said I was to remain a prisoner till they were clear away, and that they would tie me with the very rope I had brought. I pleaded with them not to do this cruel wrong, but the wretches were relentless. I determined to resist them, even if I lost my life in the attempt, but was not prepared for their well-laid scheme. Suddenly one light was put out, a pistol was held against my brow, I felt a rope round my waist, and in less than half a minute was securely tied to the column against which I had placed myself.

I saw them leaving me, and for a few moments was speechless from the suddenness of the act and my exertions whilst resisting. I saw their lights dying away in the distance. Suddenly they disappeared, and I was in Egyptian darkness. I called as loudly as I could, and asked them not to leave me bound in the horrid place, but they heeded not my cry. I heard their retreating steps fainter and fainter. Now they had died away—and I was alone, and fast bound, in a chamber of death !

In my struggles to release myself, I felt the column to which I was bound jagged at several points. Against these I rubbed the rope up and down with all the energy of despair. It was giving way ! A few minutes later the ends fell apart, and I was free !—but, in my joy, forgot I was as one blind. I stretched out my hands and felt all around, crawled along the ground, feeling my way till I came to the side of the cave, and then reached up as high as I could. Then I walked around it, still feeling my way by touching the wall and floor alternately. But I was absolutely lost, and did not know whether I was going towards the entrance or still retreating further in. A column intercepted me, and in getting around it I fell into an opening in the floor as far as my armpits. Oh, horrors ! I could hear the stones I had loosened striking the sides of the chasm, then a splash ! as they fell into the water, as it were a hundred feet below. With a desperate effort I scrambled out, and sank exhausted on the ground.

When consciousness returned I remember calling as loudly as I could for help, but could only hear the faint, hollow echo of my own voice, reverberating through the vaulted chamber. How horrible my position ! All was still as death, and black as if in the darkest dungeon. Only the heavy throbbing of my own heart could I hear. Fear and grief now took possession of me. Great drops of perspiration ran down my face, and a cold, chilly, deathly feeling came over me. Thoughts of home, of my father and mother, of my past life, all vividly flashed across my mind. Higher thoughts came. A passage from the "Good Old Book" I had learned when a boy came as an inspiration. I prayed to God for deliverance, for was I not in trouble ? I vowed that if I escaped my future life and wealth should be devoted to "God and humanity." With such thoughts as these crowding on my mind—fearing to move lest I fell again—with limbs sore and stiff, and with that horrible blackness and stillness around me I fell upon the ground, and gave myself up as lost.

CHAPTER III.—RESCUED.

When my comrades returned, at an earlier hour than usual, they found the place deserted, and everything left in disorder. They had missed Dowling and Price a few hours after starting in the morning, and were wondering what had become of them. Now that I, too, was missing, they became very much alarmed. "What was the meaning of it? Had the two newcomers anything to do with it? Had they taken Stansbury's life?" These were questions put to each other. Hastily calling "Jimmy," the native, they decided to go at once in search. Briefly they told him the facts of the case. A few minutes later he was on their tracks. He said "One horse come along this way; two horses go 'long other way." Following these up for nearly seven miles, they were led to the mouth of the "Big Cave," and from there the tracks of three horses led off in another direction. Dismounting rapidly, they decided to search the cave before pursuing, for they felt sure some fatality had happened. At the entrance leading down into the cave there were recent footprints of two men only coming out, though there were no signs of a struggle. One of the bootmarks was that of Dowling, whose left foot was turned in a little. Jimmy examined the marks, and said—"Master no bin there." (This was true, because I had entered the cave at another and a smaller entrance.) But they felt sure that I *had* been in the vicinity, because my horse was one of the three whose tracks they saw, and yet only two men went with them.

Picking up two pieces of candle, which had evidently been dropped by Dowling and Price, they told "Jimmy" they were going in. He said, "Me know big one cave. Long time ago blackfellow kill'em nother blackfellow; then him brother come along, and spear first blackfellow. Him crawl in this one cave, lie down, and 'crackaback,' (die)."

At first he was unwilling to go in with them, but after promises of good things, and that they would go first, he consented.

They entered single file, the native going second. When they had gone about two hundred yards "Jimmy" gave a frightful yell, and rushed to the left-hand side of the leader. Pointing with his long, black, bony hand, he said, "Me see blackfellow; him dead." They lifted their candles, and in the crevice of the rock, crouched up in a lying position, was the form of a man. It startled them, for at the moment they thought it was my body. Looking closer, they saw it was the rigid form of a native. Whilst gazing and wondering, they were startled by hearing a faint "Coo——ee." Hark! there it is again. The tone was that of one in deep distress. Giving a "coo——ee" in reply, and knowing now they were on the right track, they hastened on. Coming to a small opening they crawled through and found themselves in a great vaulted chamber. Now they heard a louder call from me, in response to theirs. Pushing on with as much haste as the dangerous floor would allow, and repeating the signal cry, in five minutes they were within speaking distance of me. "Is that you, Stansbury?" "Yes," was faintly given. "Are you safe?" "Yes." "We are coming." In reply they heard my faint, but joyous, "Thank God."

They reached me just in t'me. I was weak and helpless from my falls ; had lost all hope ; was terrified at my position ; and felt that the few hours I had been there I had lived a lifetime—and that my end was near. Oh ! how glad I was. How passionately I thanked them, and even hugged them in my rapturous joy.

We sooned gained the mouth of the cave, and when I saw the glorious sunlight, and realised that I was saved, I lifted my heart, and prayed that my vow in the cave might never be broken.

CHAPTER IV.—RETRIBUTION.

When we reached the station we found that Dowling and Price had been there, and had stolen a gun, two pistols, all the ammunition that was handy, besides provisions for their journey. We discussed, "was it wise to pursue ? I pointed out "if we did blood would be shed—probably our own—as they were better armed than we were." Being the greatest sufferer, the decision was left to me. In the interests of our party, and because my life had been spared, I decided not to follow them. My companions consented, at the same time saying the "just retribution of Heaven" would overtake them.

Two years later Maitland, Mac., and myself left for Adelaide. Going through the Ninety-mile Desert one night our horses strayed. Whilst searching for them the next morning Mac. pointed to a heap of bleached human bones. Near by, almost buried in sand, were a battered canteen and a rusty pistol. These we recognised as having been the property of Dowling. Scratched in the canteen after some difficulty these words were made out—"We are dying from thirst." Thus they miserably perished.





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

20m-767(H3149s4)

PR5112 . C22F

PAMPHLET BINDER
Syracuse, N.Y.
Stockton, Calif.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 374 398 6

